# HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL EXCURSIONS IN OPERA-LAND

# Samson's Enslavement Depicted in Opera

History of Saint-Saens's Opera-Character of Dalila-Was She a Religious Patriot?-Bawd or Wife?-Musical and Dramatic High Points in the Score.

> By H. E. KREHBIEL. (Copyright, 1916; H. E. Krehbiel.)

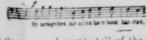
TT IS not often that an operatic figure invites to such a study as that which I have attempted in the case of Samson, and it may be that the sidewise excursion in which I indulged last week invites criticism of the kind illustrated in the metaphor of using a club to brain a gnat. But I do not think so. If heroic When genius in a creator is paired s in an interpreter, the hero of an opera is quite as deheroes in order to illuminate the impersonations of Lehmann or Scaria; nor is Maurel's Iago less worthy

The character of Dalila presents even more features of in erest than that of the man of whom she was the undoing, and

piece for the lyric theatre, albeit one in which adherence to a nd these being restricted by the obvious desire of osers to avoid such extraneous matter as Rossini and sacred historian give her the title of the secondary love stories, for instance), Saint-Saens could do se than employ liberally the splendid factor of choral



"Romeo et Juliette," where a costumed group of singers presents a prologue, vaguely visible through a gaute curtain. Meyerheer tried the expedient in "Le Pardon de Ploërnel," and the siciliano in Mascagni's "Cavalleria rustheir knees and in attitudes of mourn- music: ng among them Samson. The voice



of lamentation takes a fugal form:

as the oppressed people tell of the sufferings which they have endured: Et les gentils penfanant ten untel, etc.

The expression rises almost to the intensity of sacrilegious accusation as the people recall to God the vow made to them in Egypt, but sinks to accents of awe when they reflect upon the incicents of their former serfdom. Now Samson stands forth. In a broad Arioso, half recitative, half cantilena, wholly in the oratorio style when it foes not drop into the mannerism of Meyerbeerian opera, he admonishes his brethren of their need to trust in God. for the guidance of Jehovah.

awords in the scintillant scale passages, at least be safe from the daughter of white rush upward from the eager. Dalilah, the Wily One." Also "The stry, pushing figure which mutters Rogueries of Dalilah, the Crafty, and erzelites catch fire from Samson's Catcher."

voices before the dis- their pman is in the solemn tone of Delilah.

Frame ye je - he - wat! Tell all the wnorrows. fruit tet et mateu

ticana" and the prologue in Leoncaval- It is a fine piece of dramatic chartribes." h's "Parisacci" are other cases in acterization, which is followed by one point. Of these only the last can be whos serene beauty is heightened by said to achieve its purpose in arrest- contrast. Dalila and a company of mg the early attention of the audience. singing and dancing Philistine women When the cortain opens we see a pub- come in bearing garlands of flowers. he place in Gaza in front of the tem- Not only Samson's senses, our own as ple of Dagon. The Israelites are on well, are ravished by the delightful

> 184 . . . . . . . . . New Springs charries and brings flowing



The Character of Dalila.

Dalila is here and it is become nec- which enslave me."-he. Itomises to aid them, of the wonders essary to say something of her, having "Sweet is the Bly of the valley, the power of love to strengthen her which he slew at his death were more than the put off their struction she accomplished. Let the sweeter and more pleasant are my stocks are more pleasant are my stocks and more pleasant are and valor. At he proceeds in his troduce her: "Was Delilah a patriotic The Old Hebrew warns again: "If says, is supernatural and flows from a he raises his hands mutely in prayer; and valor. At he proceeds in his troduce her: "Was Delilah a patriotic The Old Hebrew warns again: "If says, is supernatural and flows from a he raises his hands mutely in prayer; which he was consecrated to then follows the temptress with falter-wow with which he was consecrated to long steps and enters her dwelling. The Soubtz and put on their armor of faith ingenious and erudite Philip Hale in- kisses!"-she. The Prophet." The Israelites mutis "The Prophet." The Israelites mutis gloomily of the departure of their
make of glory, but gradually take
"Samson and pledge themselves."

Judith, or was she merely a courtesan, my son, curses will alight on thee
the glory of Israel. Once while
the lay in her arms that strength had deserted him, but now, it is said, he deserted him, but now, it is said, he flouts her love and doubts his own passion. There is no need to try to stormy night: "Trahison!"

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The prophet." The Israelites mutthe glory of Israel. Once while
the glory of Israel. On Massed Samson and pledge themselves translates it "traitress," and so does the scene with Dalila (are they priestto do battle with the foe with him un- Ranke. Knobel characterizes her as eases of Dagon?) dance swinging their she hates Samson more bitterly than die Zarte, which means tender, deli- floral garlands seductively before the the leader of his enemies. She is not Now Abimelech, Satrap of Gaza, ap- cate, but also subtle. Lange is sure eyes of Samson and his followers. The faves, sneers at their God as impotent other Germans who think the word is upon him. It is in vain; his eyes foland craven, lifts up the form of Dagon, akin to the verb cinfullen, to lull low her through all the voluptuous The he says, shall pursue Jehovah as asleep. Some liken it to the Arabic postures and movements of the dance. alecon pursues a dove. The speech dalilah, a woman who misguides, a Mis Sumson with a divine anger, which hawd. See in "The Thousand Nights brests forth in a canticle of prayer and a Night" the speech of the damsel end prophecy. There is a flash as of to Aziz: "If thou marry me thou wilt

distance and or and echo the words in We are directly concerned here with cert rooms, but not so often as the the summons them to break their the Dalila of the opera, but Mr. Hale air with which the love-duet in the Sains. Abimelech rushes forward to invites us to an excursion which offers second act reaches its culmination, Samson, but the hero wrenches the a pleasant occupation for a brief while, which is popularly held also to mark "the from the Philistine's hand and we cheerfully go with him. The the climax of the opera. That song

THE NEW SINGING SOCIETY REHEARSING ON WARM AUGUST EVENING.



visible action in an opera temple psalmody, the first striking bit of her bribery by the lords of the

Dan, in Judsh and the bordering It is not until we see and hear card: "Mon cour s'ouvre a ta voix,"

wholly and simply a siren, a seduc- island people, invaded from the West. tress who plays upon the known love of Dalila, gorgeously apparelled, is sit-Samson from motives which are not ting on a rock near the portico of her disclosed. As yet one may imagine her house. The strings of the orchestra moved by a genuine passion. She turns murmur and the chromatic figure her lustrous black eyes upon him as which we shall hear sgain in her loveshe hails him a double victor over his song coos in the wood-winds. foes and her heart, and invites him to rest from his arms in her embraces in the fair valley of Sorek. Temptation seizes upon the soul of Samson. He prays God to make him stendfast; but she winds her toils the tighter: It is for him that she has bound a coronet made her slave in full confidence of use. Samson hears the voice of his of purple grapes upon her forehead her hold upon him. and entwined the rose of Sharon in her shon tresses. An Old Hebrew warns against the temptress and Samson agonizingly invokes a veil over the beauty that has enchained him. "Extinguish the fires of those eyes

the theatrical pose of John of Leyden Judith, or was she merely a courtesan, my son, curses will alight on thee



and rages among the instruments. The her daughter, Zayrah, the Coney And Dalila sings "Printemps qui commence" - a song often heard in con-



charm; it pulsates with passion, so naught. Now she will assail him with indeed, that it is difficult to tears a woman's weapon.

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revealed to us in her true character.

Not till now does she disclose the motives of her conduct toward her lover. Night is falling in the valley of Sorek, the vale which lies between the hill country which the Israelites entered from the East, and the coast land In the scene before us Dalila is which the Philistines, supposedly an



Amour! viens abler ma fathlesse

The vengeance of her gods shall be High Pricet: Samson's strength, he says, is supernatural and flows from a

wondrously insinuating in its secret and thrice had he set her spell at

feigned, but this is lovelier in its fresh, the scene is lit up by flashes of lightof her wifehood, but also attributed and eyes repeat their lure, while Let him but doubt her constancy and patriotic motives to her. She knew Samson's looks and acts betray the Dalila in the second act that she is while the fluttering strings and cooing wood-winds insinuate themselves into ness and loosen the rivets that hold it

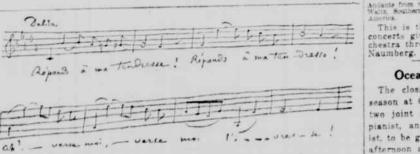


This is the strength and the weakness of music; it must fain be truthful. Dalila's words may be hypocritical, but the music speaks the speech shricks out the hate that fills her and with his left. runs toward her dwelling.

as well as internal peace in the "Dona self with all his might; and the house nobis" of his Mass in D by mingling fell upon the lords and upon all the the sounds of war with the prayer for people that were therein. So the dead peace; Saint-Saëns pictures the storm which he slew at his death were more the waiting Phillistine soldiery below. concert on the Central Park Mail is as

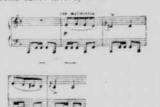
#### Samson's Revenge.

she scorns the promise of riches which the High Pricat offers so she obtain locks, which as a Nazarite he had the secret of the Hebrew's strength, vowed should never be touched by the musical triology dress. the rails at the Israelites as an out-and-out "zonah" There are Dalila, joining in the dance, throws Thrice had she essayed to learn that shears, labors at the mill. He has been Contralte sole (a) garotte. Mignon .....



Facsimile of an autograph from "Samson et Dalila."

settled down upon him; darkness, too, "Total eclipse!" Saint-Saens has won There, before the statue of the god, are Louis Siegel, violinist. a pupil of they secured eighty of these original grouped among the columns and before Ysaye, will be soloists at the opening melodies, folk-songs of the mountain by the lords of the Philistines. Dalila.





altar. Now a supreme act of insolent impelty: Samson, too, shall sacrifice to Dagon. A boy is told to lead him Under the auspices and for the bene- Vaccari, soprano; A. Antola, barytone; where all can witness his humilia- fit of the Civic Orchestral Society two Emanele Critalli, Salvatore Sciaretti, tion. Samson feels that the time for gala night performances of open air tenors; David Silvani, Ernesto Delleretribution upon his enemies is come. grand opera, with Metropolitan Opera pietro, barytones; Natale Cervi, Pietro He asks to be led between the marble stars, orchestra and chorus, will be De Biasi, Pietro Canova, bassos; Maria pillars that support the roof of the given at the Lewisohn Stadium of the Cristiani, Lavinia Darve, Sophie Wood. temple. Priests and people, the trait- City College of New York-"Walkure" Maria Paggio, sopranos, and Beatrice of genuine passion. Not until we hear ress and her dancing women, the lords in German, Monday, September 18, at Cardona, Maria Stellini, Bernice Marof the Philistines, the rout of ban- 7:45 o'clock, and "Cavalleria Rusti- shom, mezzo-sopranos. The directors last scene of the drama can we believe that the passion hymned in this song is feigned. And we almost deplore that tion to Israel's God. "And Samson of lark" [145 o'clock, and "Cavalleria Rusting an tion to Israel's God. "And Samson o'clock. She awaits him whom passion has the composer put it to such disgraceful took hold of the two middle pillars God in the growing storm and again hesitates. The storm bursts as Dalila shrieks out the hate that fills her and with his left.

Among those who have volunteered their services are Amato, Botta, Braun, Friday Lucia de their services are Amato, Botta, Braun, Friday Caralleria Husticaea a Saturday Afternoon Saturday Evening Sunday Afternoon Sunday Afternoon Sunday Cavalleria Husticaea a

Beethoven sought to suggest external the Philistines.' And he bowed him-

### Labor Day Park Concert.

Oresture, Il) Guarant Gomes Gomes Selection, La Belacus Comuratio anno (4) Mon Comur S'ouvre & Ta Saint-Stems (From Samson and Delliah." Massenet

Andante from Symphony No. 5. Tschalkowsky Waltz, Southern Bosee Johann Straus This is the last one of the season's concerts given by the Kaltenborn Orchestra through the courtesy of Elkan

#### Ocean Grove Recitals. The closing events of the musical

season at Ocean Grove, N. J., will be two joint recitals by Rudolph Ganz pianist, and Albert Spalding, violinist, to be given in the auditorium, the

## Music News and Notes of the Week

ing Society will be held to-morrow The technical director is Edward evening at 8 o'clock at 209 East Forty- Siedle and the chorus master Giulio second Street. At these rehearsals, Setti. Assistant conductors are F. which are held Monday and Thursday Romei, W. Tyroler, Fred Jacobi and the chorus receive training in voice to \$2.50 will be on sale at the stations

Among the women responsible for ning to-morrow. the development of the society are Mrs. | Mme. Yvette Guilbert will appear Rudolph Schirmer, Mrs. Edward S. L. Camillieri is the conductor. All

ple of America good music at popular cases are forced to give their services

the Managing and Producing Company at the Manhattan Opera House for Sunday evenings, beginning Septem-

o'clock, at the Maverick Music Chapel

den, when the soloist was another songs of American composers, such as Metropolitan Opera star, Mme. Mela-nie Kurt, dramatic soprano. Mr. Roth-Kramer, George Chittenden Turner and well, the conductor, had arranged a others. Wagner-Liszt programme, as follows: The Royal Grand Opera Company

Overture. Rison". Wagner opens its season to-morrow at the Nasymphonic Poem No. 1, The Preductor List Sents's Ballad, from the Fibrus Dunchman". Wagner tional Theatre, Second Avenue and Houston Street. man" Mme. Kur. Wagner
Introduction to Act. III. Tobengrin' Wagner
Neconi Rungarini Rungari Tobengrin' Wagner
Isolde' Lore Death from Tristan under
Isolde' Mme. Kur. Wagner
Overture, Tambauser' Wagner
Overture, Tambauser' Wagner
Overture, Antola barytone:

Among those who have volunteered Wednesday

The next meeting of the New Sing- | nold Conti, conductor of Italian operas

again in New York next season at the Harkness and Mrs. Dunlevy Milbank. Maxine Elliott Theatre. She announces the collaboration of several American

A song recital by Mme. Maria Mieler Studied in Paris, New Orleans and

Hans Merx, lieder singer, has been engaged for four song recitals by the Catholic Champlain Assembly, at Cliff

tional Theatre, Second Avenue and



afternoon and evening of Labor Day. Emma Eames (Mrs. Emilio de Gogorza) and Mr. de Gogorza at Bath, Me., where they have a summer home.